TRAI's suggestion for Improving rural mobile telephony

1682. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether concerned over rising gap in urban and rural communications facilities, telecom regulator, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has favoured offering incentives for telecom service providers to increase competition in rural areas, so that, growth in urban areas could be replicated thereto;

(b) whether the last decade saw tremendous growth in the telecom sector;

(c) if so, the main suggestions made by the TRAI for improving rural mobile telephony;

(d) by when these are likely to be introduced and implemented; and

(e) whether any concrete action plan has been prepared therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRAI) of India has given its recommendation on 'Growth of Telecom Services in Rural India' in October, 2005.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The salient features of the recommendations made by TRAI are as follows:-

- Sharing of infrastructure to receive support from USO.
- Supporting backbone infrastruture through USO Fund.
- Discount in Annual License Fee and Spectrum Charges linked with Rural Coverage.
- Development of suitable applications.
- Reduction of rural VSAT license fees and spectrum charges and provision of transponders at affordable rates.
- No right of way charges for networks in rural areas.

- Niche Operators to be supported from USOF and exemption from spectrum charges.
- No spectrum fees for usage of Cor DECT and similar technologies in rural areas as well as for usage of 450 MHz.
- No prior SACFA clearance for deployment of towersupto40 m. in rural areas.
- Funds collected as Universal Access levy should be made available to USOF.

(d) and (e) The recommendations received from TRAI are being examined by the Government. It is not feasible to give a firm time limit for their implementation.

Recommendations of Supreme Court on unsolicited phone calls

†1683. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has given any decision regarding unsolicited phone calls;

(b) if so, the main recommendation of the said decision;

(c) whether the Department of Communication are complying with the said recommendations; and

(d) if so, the reasons for the harassment of subscribers due to unsolicited phone calls?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The Supreme Court, in the matter of Dr. Harsh Pathak Versus Union of India and others (Civil Writ Petition No. 35 of 2005) regarding unsolicited phone calls has issued notice to the respondents. No specific recommendation of Supreme Court in the said case has been received by the Department of Telecommunications so far.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.